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Region for WTDC-10
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Priority area

Telecommunications/ICT policy and regulatory matters, including ICT economics (market analysis, cost modelling and tariffs) and statistics (indicators, measuring the information society). This includes Human capacity building in each of these areas.

Summary

With this contribution, the United States recommends six priorities for our region and the 2011-2014 Action Plan. Effective execution of each of these priorities will require a central role for the private sector. We recommend that the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) and its Programs, through the next Action Plan promote: (i) increased access to broadband infrastructure, services, and applications; (ii) security of communications networks; (iii) public safety and emergency communications; (iv) an enabling policy environment; (v) a demonstrable focus on gender, the disabled, and youth (vi) ways to use ICT to combat climate change and (viii) a focus on e-government. We also posit specific comments on the role of the Development Bureau and its proposed changes to the existing Programs.

Introduction

It is a great pleasure for the United States of America to participate in this Regional Preparatory Meeting (RPM) for one of the most important meetings of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) – the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC). These quadrennial meetings allow the membership an opportunity to evaluate progress, review accomplishments, and take a fresh look at our sector – both how we organize ourselves, and the substantive priorities we will undertake for the next four-year study period.

The universal aspect of today's communications capabilities makes the world seem smaller than ever before. The opportunities and challenges presented by information and communications technology are now shared globally. United States President Barack Obama recently observed how much smaller and more connected our world has become, noting that we have the opportunity to choose how we will respond to these changes. He went on to say that "we have known for a long time that the revolutions in communications and technology that took place in the 20th century would hold out enormous promise for the 21st century, the promise of broader prosperity and mobility, of new breakthroughs and discoveries that could help us lead richer and fuller lives."

Our work here will reflect our common views on how to turn this potential into reality for both developed and developing countries alike. In this regard, we will consider ways to accelerate expansion and use of advanced information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure, services, and applications in developing countries, as these are certain tools of innovation and economic growth. We will identify the

Contact point: Name/Organization/Entity: Doreen McGirr, Department of State, United States
Phone number: +1 202 647 0201
Email: mcgirrdf@state.gov

work that is most important to our region, and in planning for the future, we will build on the lessons learned from our common experiences in past study periods.

With this contribution, the United States recommends six priorities for our region and the 2011-2014 Action Plan. Effective execution of each of these priorities will require a central role for the private sector. We recommend that the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) and its Programs, through the next Action Plan promote: (i) increased access to broadband infrastructure, services, and applications; (ii) security of communications networks; (iii) public safety and emergency communications; (iv) an enabling policy environment; (v) a demonstrable focus on gender, the disabled, and youth (vi) ways to use ICT to combat climate change and (viii) a focus on e-government. We also posit specific comments on the role of the Development Bureau and its proposed changes to the existing Programs.

Regional Priorities

When we last met to prepare for the WTDC, our region identified several priorities for the subsequent study period in a pre-meeting survey conducted by the BDT. Broadly speaking, four categories emerged as principal concerns: new technologies and services; regulatory matters; universal access; and convergence. Moreover, as a result of deliberations at the RPM itself, our region identified and approved four programmatic priorities: 1) rural connectivity including the needs of indigenous peoples, schools, and rural medical units; 2) regional interconnection of information networks for disaster prevention; 3) support for design and implementation of policies and programs for large scale broadband access; and 4) establishing a Caribbean task force on spectrum management, including harmonized approaches for the sub-region.

Additionally, we noted and continue to recognize the *Agenda for Connectivity in the Americas* and the *Quito Plan of Action*, first adopted at the turn of the millennium, endorsed by the WTDC in Istanbul, Turkey, and advanced to date by CITELE. Among other things, this agenda encourages decision-makers in the Americas to formulate their own national plans to increase access to knowledge and information, and a number have successfully done so.

More recently, we note the exceptional work of our neighbors in the region reflected in the *San Salvador Commitment* adopted at the Second Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean (February 2008), which approved the *eLAC 2010 Plan of Action*. We commend these measures, the *Bávaro Declaration* (January 2003, Dominican Republic) and the *Rio de Janeiro Commitment & Plan of Action* (June 2005, Brazil) which *eLAC 2010* built upon, and we note the priorities identified in *eLAC 2010* including e-education, infrastructure and access, e-health, policy instruments and strategies, gender, ICTs and disabilities, and ICTs and the environment.

Bearing in mind these related regional activities, and in collaboration with our neighbors in the hemisphere, the United States seeks to develop a policy environment that encourages continued growth and expansion of ICT infrastructure, applications and services that is also consistent with the larger context of development goals articulated in recent years: the Millennium Development Goals, the World Summit on the Information Society, the Doha Action Plan, and the 2009 World Telecommunication Policy Forum. We all have an interest in a cohesive environment that leads to innovation, particularly as we face the current challenges of the global economic crisis. It is only in such an environment that we can establish the sustainable job creation, economic growth, and entrepreneurship that lead to the full benefits of a thriving economy.

To that end, the United States posits comments, new proposals, and recommendations in two areas for consideration at this RPM: 1) broad substantive priorities; and 2) the mandate, role, and activities of the BDT in light of these priorities, including the general execution of ITU programs in the Americas.

Broad Priorities 2010 - 2014

The Americas region is experiencing consistent growth in ICTs. As of 2007, the mobile penetration rate for the Americas stood at 72 percent, up from 30 percent in 2002. In this same period Internet penetration levels increased to 43 percent from 28 percent.¹ Thirty percent of total broadband subscribers reside in the Americas,² where there is 11% fixed broadband penetration.³ Between 2000 and 2007, the average

¹ *Measuring the Information Society*, International Telecommunication Union 2009, at 4.

² *Trends in Telecommunication Reform*, International Telecommunication Union, 2008 at 8, Fig 1.2.

per capita international bandwidth capacity in Latin America and the Caribbean increased from 8 bps to 1126 bps, only slightly behind Europe and Central Asia.⁴ And while we can be pleased that progress has occurred and can applaud exemplary performers in the region like Chile where broadband subscribers represent over 90% of all Internet subscribers,⁵ there is much more work to be done.

According to a recent World Bank econometrics analysis of 120 countries, for every 10 percentage point increase in the penetration of broadband services, there is an increase in economic growth of 1.3 percentage points. This growth effect of broadband is significant and stronger in developing countries than in developed economies, and it is higher than that of telephony and Internet.⁶ Furthermore, a study involving businesses and technology decision makers in 1200 companies in six Latin American countries – Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Mexico – showed that broadband deployment was associated with considerable improvements in business organization, including speed and timing of business and process reengineering, process automation, data processing, and diffusion of information within organizations.⁷ Broadband networks also facilitate various social networking mechanisms rapidly gaining in popularity. Some of the fastest growing websites are those referred to as “social utilities” that bring people together not only in local communities, but around the world. The use of search engines continues to grow exponentially around the world bringing to our citizens information that could not be imagined a mere decade ago.

Given that broadband networks are demonstrably key to economic, social and political progress, the United States recommends that **increasing access to broadband infrastructure, services and applications** should be among the highest priorities for our region, and for ITU-D going forward into the 2011 – 2014 period. **Promoting the security of these networks** should also be a principal aim of the next ITU-D Action Plan, as well as ensuring the availability and use of secure broadband networks for **public safety and emergency communications services**. A focus on **an enabling policy environment** approach to ICTs, the Internet, and other innovations that encourages innovation, investment, and economic growth is crucial, as are initiatives for **gender and youth**. A concentration on ICT as a means for slowing harmful **climate change** is also warranted, as is a higher priority for **e-government** as a means to attain more efficient and effective government and greater social inclusion. In achieving these aims, the **central role of the private sector** must be maintained. Going forward we believe that close collaboration between the public and private sectors as well as other stakeholders will be required as never before.

Like other regions around the world, we in the Americas must bridge the **standardization gap**. Building upon initiatives called for in Resolution 123 (Rev. Antalya, 2006) and Resolution 76 from the 2008 World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-08), we believe that the Americas should move rapidly to assess the region’s needs and priorities in this area and examine such issues as conformity and interoperability testing.⁸ To facilitate this work, and consistent with WTSA Resolution 76, we propose that **a new study question be established in ITU-D Study Group 2** as described in a separate contribution to this meeting.⁹

Importantly, we note that the ITU is not alone in its examination of ways to minimize the standardization gap. Last July, for example, major Standards Development Organizations (SDOs) gathered in Geneva at the **14th Global Standards Collaboration (GSC)** and discussed, among other things, the critical matter of standards to promote end-to-end interoperability. Recognizing the importance of the issue, the **GSC endorsed its “Interoperability” Resolution (GSC-14/28)** which we attach to this contribution. In Resolution GSC-14/28, GSC recognizes that one of the most important goals of standards is to facilitate interoperability. At the same time, **GSC cautions that “compliance with technical standards is not a guarantee for interoperability.”** As we in the Americas seek to address the standardization gap, we

³ *Measuring the Information Society*, International Telecommunication Union 2009, at 4.

⁴ *Information and Communications for Development*, The World Bank, 2009 at 127.

⁵ *Measuring the Information Society*, International Telecommunication Union 2009, at 4.

⁶ *Information and Communications for Development*, The World Bank, 2009 at 5 citing Qiang, 2009.

⁷ *Id. citing* Momentum Research Group, 2005.

⁸ Johannesburg, 2008, Resolution 76, “Studies related to conformance and interoperability testing, assistance to developing countries, and a possible future ITU Mark programme,”

⁹ See United States proposed new question titled “Bridging the Standardization Gap: Studies to identify and assess needs and priorities of countries and human and institutional capacity building in type approval, conformity assessment, and other related matters.”

urge that parties take note of this important GSC warning so that we can identify realistic goals for our work.¹⁰

The United States recognizes the need for national action and international cooperation to build a global culture of cybersecurity, a principle reflected in United Nations General Assembly Resolution 57/239, the Geneva Declaration of Principles, the Geneva Plan of Action, and reaffirmed in the Tunis Agenda. We are committed to promoting actions that include national coordination, appropriate national legal infrastructures, and watch, warning and recovery capabilities, government/industry partnerships, and outreach to civil society and consumers. We urge our neighbors in the hemisphere and ITU-D, as a priority, to make use of the tools available to build confidence in the use of ICT networks.

Following the devastating impact of the 2005 hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico, the role of telecommunications/ICTs in disaster prediction, mitigation, relief and recovery has been clearly demonstrated. The United States places high priority on modernizing our public safety communications infrastructures to ensure connectivity and interoperability when communications are most needed. Much work in this area is still left to be done in the United States, the Americas region, and throughout the world. Developing countries and Small Island Developing States are particularly vulnerable to the impact that a natural or man-made disaster can have on their economies and infrastructures.

We therefore encourage our neighbors and ITU-D in the coming study period to elevate the current emphasis on emergency and public safety communications requirements as part of network deployment strategies. We recommend that developing countries particularly, when working to extend networks and services to all citizens, including in remote and rural areas, include emergency communications considerations as part of overall connectivity and development projects. We strongly recommend that regulatory and policy frameworks for telecommunications/ICT take emergency communications into account, and permit maximum flexibility for implementation of the most innovative terrestrial, satellite, and integrated solutions available.

Moreover, there is growing recognition of the important role of satellite and ground-based sensing platforms for environmental observation, weather and climate change monitoring. Given the increased frequency of natural and man-made disasters, we recommend that the use of ICTs to detect and warn the public of dangerous weather events and the use of satellite-based technologies to provide communications support to government and non-governmental aid providers be integrated into disaster preparedness and response. For the 2010-2014 development cycle, the United States encourages the ITU-D, within its mandate, to elevate its focus on strategies to enhance use of telecommunications/ICTs for disaster prediction, preparedness, response and recovery, and within the overall context of the deployment of advanced technologies such as broadband.

There is increasing recognition that economically empowering women is a key strategy for economic development. At its fifty-second session in 2008, the United Nations Economic and Social Council's Commission on the Status of Women noted the growing body of evidence which demonstrates that investing in women and girls has a multiplier effect on productivity, efficiency and sustained economic growth, and that increasing women's economic empowerment was central to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and to eradicating poverty.¹¹ The United Nations General Assembly's resolution on "Women in development" adopted in 2007, among other things, recognized the need to empower women economically, and encouraged governments, with the support of their development partners, to invest in

¹⁰ "Resolution GSC-14/28: Interoperability" was endorsed by the participating organizations at GSC-14, which included: the Association of Radio Industries and Businesses (ARIB) of Japan, the China Communications Standards Association (CCSA), the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI), the ICT Standards Advisory Council of Canada (ISACC), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions (ATIS), the Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) from the United States, the Telecommunications Technology Association (TTA) of Korea, and the Telecommunication Technology Committee (TTC) of Japan.

¹¹ 2009 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development "Women's control over economic resources and access to financial resources, including microfinance" Report of the Expert Consultation, United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Bangkok, Thailand, 12-14 November 2008. See also Gender equality as smart economics: A World Bank Group Gender Action Plan (Fiscal years 2007 – 2010) (World Bank, September 2006) Washington, DC.

appropriate infrastructure.... for women and girls.¹² We therefore recommend that for the 2011-2014 period, ITU-D acquire and exercise a strong and pervasive focus on gender issues. An ITU-D Action Plan that accords high priority to gender issues in all of its programs is destined to achieve its goals.

Mandate, Role, and Activities of ITU-D and the BDT

The United States appreciates the unique structure of the Development Sector within the Union and supports its mission to provide technical and other assistance to developing countries, Least Developed Countries (LDCs), countries in special need, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and emerging economies. We believe that the sector has been a particularly effective forum for idea and information exchange, and as such, often an optimal place for diverse membership to reach consensus. The Sector's practice of issuing non-binding best practice guidelines rather than prescriptive recommendations strikes the correct balance between formality and informality. This method recognizes the diverse circumstances of the membership, their national sovereignty, and we would be loath to attach more formality to the Sector's valuable outputs.

In TDAG document 14 (23 January 09) titled "Fresh look on ITU-D Activities," the BDT Secretariat raised a number of questions for discussion, but in the main inexplicably proposes to reduce the number of BDT Programs from six to four. Under the secretariat's proposal, Program 4 (Economics and Finance) and Program 6 (Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Emergency Telecoms) would be eliminated as programs. This raises questions of both substance and procedure.

First, we note that the ITU is an intergovernmental organization that relies upon its Member State constituency for its core mission while fully recognizing and appreciating the essential role played by Sector Members and Associates. This member-driven character of the Union is firm and inviolate. Proposals to eliminate or significantly diminish crucial areas must be carried out in response to the clearly articulated sentiment of the membership. While we can be genuinely appreciative of the secretariat's attempts to conserve resources, it is difficult to credibly restructure existing BDT Programs in advance of ascertaining the priorities of the membership as articulated at the five RPMs and the WTDC.

With regard to the substance of the proposal, the United States believes that Member States who are LDCs, countries in special need, and SIDS are a sufficiently distinct and important constituency to warrant the dedicated program that currently exists. The LDC program was created at WTDC-02 (Istanbul) in response to membership requests and followed successful activities associated with the Special Program for Least Developed Countries created by WTDC-98 (Valletta). Moreover, the existing program complements the United Nations General Assembly Programme for Least Developed Countries and is the only one that focuses specifically on telecommunications for this group of Member States. The purpose of the WTDC is to renew and redouble efforts to narrow the gap in communications between developed and developing countries. The United States believes that the programmatic mechanism for addressing the least developed of our Member States is necessary and must be preserved.

As discussed earlier, the United States believes that emergency communications should be one of the priorities for the upcoming four-year period, and that activities related to this important topic should be elevated in our future work. Elimination of the Program responsible for this subject matter would be inconsistent with our recommended course of action, and we do not support it.

In considering the current roster of study group questions, however, the United States observes that consolidation is urgently needed. Overlap and duplication wastes vital resources and undermines meaningful delivery of information and services to developing countries – the core mission of ITU-D. The work of the study questions is an important tool for ICT capacity building and is vital to information sharing between developing and developed countries. Consequently, in order to enhance the work of the study groups as well as the benefits to developing countries, we urge appropriate consolidation.

As currently configured for example, several questions pertain to technical convergence and deployment of broadband. **Question 18/2** proposes to study "implementation aspects of IMT and information-sharing on IMT Systems;" **Question 19/2** calls for study on "strategy for broadband access development and migration to next-generation networks (NGN);" and **Question 20/2** proposes to examine "access technologies for broadband telecommunications." The ITU has recognized IMT as a broadband access

¹² United Nations General Assembly, resolution A/RES/62/206, para. 19.

technology; all three questions proposing to cover related aspects of broadband access should be studied together. Accordingly, the United States proposes a merged question for consideration by Members of our region.

The United States strongly recommends that study group questions for the period 2010 – 2014 avoid such duplication, and that a management plan addressing these issues and reflecting the recommended consolidation be presented for approval by TDAG and the WTDC.

Proposed New and Modified Questions for Study 2011 - 2014

For the 2011 – 2014 period, and going in to the upcoming WTDC, the United States proposes and urges support from the Americas Region for three proposals, submitted as separate contributions to this RPM:

- Modifications proposed by the United States to the Terms of Reference of Study Group 1 Question 22/1 on Cybersecurity;
- Proposed new question by the United States: "Bridging the Standardization Gap: Studies to identify and assess needs and priorities of countries and human and institutional capacity building in type approval, conformity assessment, and other related matters;" and
- Proposed new question by the United States: "Examination of Broadband Access Technologies (including IMT, NGN, and Satellite Technologies) for Developing Countries."

The United States also supports, in principle, continuing study in the areas of national enforcement of telecommunications laws, and utilization of telecommunications/ICTs for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

ATTACHMENT**RESOLUTION GSC-14/28: (Plenary) Interoperability (new)**

The 14th Global Standards Collaboration meeting (Geneva, July 2009)

Recognizing:

- a) that providing for interoperability is an aim of standards,
- b) that standards development processes, while promoting interoperability, should also foster innovation, competition and infrastructure development that address user needs on a timely and cost-effective basis;
- c) that supporting innovations in user applications and in network capabilities drive the development of standards;
- d) that product development and deployment cycles have become shorter and shorter over time to accommodate increasing features and capabilities to address user needs;
- e) that the pace of innovation will continue to accelerate;
- f) that various mechanisms are available to enhance interoperability, including developing "interoperable standards", providing implementation guidelines, hosting interoperability events and human capacity building;
- g) that compliance with technical standards is not a guarantee for interoperability;

Considering:

- a) that the availability of interoperable standards can be used to promote interoperability and facilitate interconnection negotiations
- b) that testing (e.g. plug fests and interoperability events) can enhance the interoperability of standards;
- c) that PSOs consider interoperability as well as the other factors in Recognizing b) as an explicit objective of standards development;
- d) that PSOs have experience with the value, of interoperability testing guidelines and events, and with the limitations and costs of interoperability testing;
- e) that there is no universal solution for interoperability, and different techniques may be appropriate for different network situations;
- f) that compliance with technical standards can increase the probability of end-to-end interoperability but will not guarantee interoperability;

Resolves:

- 1) to exchange information among PSOs which have experience in interoperability.
 - 2) to encourage PSOs and related Fora/Consortia to discuss issues related to interoperability.
-